

February 27, 2015

Written testimony of Jacob S. Bompastore, Administrator, Cherry Brook Health Care Center, Concerning the Governor's Recommended FY 2016 and FY 2017 Proposed Budget

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jacob Bompastore, I am the Administrator at Cherry Brook Health Care Center in Canton, Connecticut. Cherry Brook is a 100 bed facility with 170 employees that has been a provider of quality skilled nursing and rehabilitation care in the Farmington Valley for the past 21 years.

I am here today with other members of the long term care community including many not for profit facilities, LeadingAge, CAHCF and Athena Health Care Systems. Cherry Brook has many devoted caregivers and employees who consistently deliver the highest quality care experience to anyone who resides there. I am proud to say our employees do an excellent job and our residents are truly grateful for the work they do.

Providing great care has many challenges. Residents and families expect living in Cherry Brook to be similar to staying in a hotel with the best health care. The budget crunch and with little help or increase in the past 8 years make caring for our residents increasingly difficult. If the budget passes, it will mean a decade of nearly flat funding for our nursing facility while all costs continue to rise. The idea that our nursing facility could be cut this session because of our state's ongoing financial troubles is devastating. As the administrator, I'm not sure how I could implement any cuts or how I would tell my employees or residents that we need to cut even more than our flat funding has required over the years.

Some examples of what our industry has been up against while the rates have been stagnant:

- An Increase of patient / resident acuity which has a direct impact on higher costs and time spent to provide high quality care
- Residents who reside at Cherry Brook cannot be effectively cared for at home and are increasingly more challenging to care for as they have personalized care plans

- Medications for Medicare A residents are more costly and many are not covered under the inclusive rates
- Costs of daily living; gas, natural gas, food, supplies, electricity, employee drug tests and criminal background checks have increased significantly
- The ability to recruit, hire and retain qualified staff is increasingly difficult, not to mention, their wages aren't reflective of the work and effort they are putting forth
- Applied income is becoming more of a challenge to collect due to the overall economy and shared dependence on the residents social security and retirement funds

Please help us deliver the high quality care we want to deliver and that our residents deserve. Please give us the resources we need to do it. Thank you for your time, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Jacob S. Bompastore